

178 contemporary material and intellectual culture which culmi-
439 nates in their conversion to Christianity under Roman or
Byzantine auspices. It likewise witnessed an expansion of trade
both in Central Europe and in the Orient, and in this com-
mercial expansion the Slavs in general had a definite stake.

764 Though a combined evaluation of linguistic, source, and
archaeological data permits a tolerably accurate and convinc-
ing appraisal of the material culture of the Slavs during the
pagan period, there is no such coherent mass of evidence upon
which any wholly satisfactory statement of their religious be-
liefs, demonology, and eschatology may be predicted. The early
Slavs cremated their dead, sharing this custom with their other
Indo-European neighbors (Lithuanians, Germans, Celts). Bur-
ial was adopted through foreign influence, and before the
774 various conversions both customs existed side by side. The
776 primitive pagan Slavs were animists and attributed a soul to
the natural elements in which they lived. They honored a su-
775 preme deity and also believed in the existence of wood, water,
[782] and household spirits to which they offered sacrifices. Beside
these nature spirits, they also honored the spirits of their an-
cestors and thus believed in a future life. They deified the
821 heavenly bodies and the great phenomena of nature (thunder,
lightning, wind, rain, fire).

776 Beside these animistic and manistic beliefs, the pagan Slavs
also venerated a limited number of gods, some of which were
of alien origin. The organization of a veritable pantheon was
carried farthest by the Western Slavs who lived along the Baltic
coast, a phenomenon perhaps not unconnected with Germanic
influences of early date. It is reasonably clear that all the
primitive Slavs possessed a god of the thunder and lightning,
though this deity, Perun, took on special importance among
the Russian Slavs because of special Scandinavian influences
and the importance of Thor in the Scandinavian pantheon.
Among the Western Slavs, however, Perun was less dominant
than the god of the shining sun, Svarog, a name apparently con-
nected with the indo-European base *suar, signifying "heat,

³[THE PERIOD FROM 700 TO 1000 A.D. -- ANALYST]

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851 so he may be considered able to receive the divine gifts in Communion. His dawning consciousness is trained to accept the privilege of meeting the other world as it there breaks through into this. When he is seven years old he is expected to make his first Confession, as he learns another side to the matter—his own unworthiness and responsibilities.

755 Nor does the care of the Church for the individual cease with his physical death, though it is much concentrated upon that moment. In cases of grave sickness (though not only *in articulo mortis*) or in view of some special risk of death, the devout Orthodox may be the recipient of the Sacrament of Holy Unction, and be anointed, with prayers for his recovery or safety. The long service is abbreviated in practice.

764 When a death occurs the house will be visited, even on three successive days by the priest and the prescribed service said in the presence of the body. The actual funeral service in Church is penetrated by the sense of the pathos of this life and of hope in the life to come. It contains passages of incomparable beauty, such as the first of the *ideomela* of St. John Damascene:

"What delight of life continueth unmixed with sorrow? What glory on earth remaineth unalterable? All things are more fleeting than a shadow, all things are more illusive than dreams; one moment, and all these things are succeeded by Death. But in the light of Thy countenance, and in the sweetness of Thy beauty, do Thou, O Christ, in mercy, give rest to *him* whom Thou hast chosen, forasmuch as Thou art the lover of mankind.¹

765 And the Church's pastoral care for the devout believer reaches out to him beyond the grave. There are ceremonies prescribed for the eighth and the fortieth day after death as well as for the anniversary. For according to popular belief the soul does not bid a final farewell to this world until forty days after death, the interval having been spent in visiting the scenes of its earthly life, and even Mt. Athos and Jerusalem.

¹ See a translation of the Burial Service published by Douglas Pepler, Ditchling, 1922, and with the above quotation of No. 360 in *The English Hymnal*.

ORTHODOXY AND THE PEOPLE

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Food and drink for the departed play their part in the rites for the dead, especially the grains of wheat which are now taken to symbolize the resurrection. But in the religious life of the people, Christianity has often had to come to terms with tough survivals among old pagan customs which it more or less disguises, particularly in the picturesque domestic ceremonies which often follow the more orthodox proceedings in Church. This is true not only of the rites which accompany death, but of many other observances also in the course of the year. They may not stand the test of rigid Orthodox belief, and the parish priest, who is perhaps better educated than the members of his flock, may frown upon them, but at least they have a humble part to play in reminding the peasant of the reality of the unseen world and that he is but a pilgrim in this.

Pilgrimage too in the literal sense figures prominently in the religion of the people. The desire to go on pilgrimage is felt by every faithful Orthodox believer. It may be only to the neighbouring monastery or the shrine of a local saint. It may be much further afield, and happy is he who realizes the ideal of every devout pilgrim, and journeys to the Holy Land. But whether the goal be near or far, the pilgrim goes to confess his sins, to say his prayers and to eat, drink and be merry at some place where the unseen world has markedly broken through and made it holy.

194 SOURCES OF ANCIENT MAGIC

SP the sacra of the cult, especially the products of sacrificial
 755 offering, and, as to-day, a number of those material objects
 278 which, in the reverence of the simple person towards all that
 778 serves him, acquires a force and quasi-sacred symbolism. All
 things and organisms are treated with respect, and it is not
 so much that certain of them are picked out for veneration
 or as the objects of cult-worship, as that the common outlook
 on dynamic nature gives an individual character and hence
 a recognised function to each species.

S The veneration of the oak tree does not save it from fire;
 SP that of the cherry tree makes it a sin to burn its wood or
 824 even to cut its branches: the yew is powerful and may not
 778 be burned, but it can be hewn and carved and made into
 3P useful objects, dishes, handles, ploughs, boxes, spindles, trays,
 322 as well as crosses and amulets, which are then particularly
 777 safe or lucky. The blackthorn is used for magical purposes,
 775 such as impaling a vampire; it is recommended to use it in
 789 making wooden implements for the sake of its magical prop-
 SP erties, but the tree itself can be regarded almost with dread,
 245 and may not be injured or cut down or uprooted. Nearly
 782 everywhere the grafting of fruit-tree slips on wild trees, par-
 778 ticularly on wild pears and cherries, is thought to be a
 virtuous act, amounting to a form of charity. I have heard
 of a peasant doing so as an act of expiation, a desire to obtain
 merit (*zadužbina*), in a district which knows little nowadays
 of particular tree cults. Where a ritual-agricultural calendar
 is followed in the traditional manner, all grafting is reserved
 for special days, sometimes with a special local etiology.
 SP Individuals sometimes mark the birth of a child or an animal
 844 by fertilising a tree in this way.¹ Further, I have seen over
 and over again in remote and isolated places, that a wild
 tree has been ennobled, apparently for no sound economic
 purpose. While I know that almost a sentimental element is

¹ At Rakljanako Polje a pine tree was said to have sprung from a branch stuck in the ground by the Empress Milica when Car Lazar was born. Cf. J. Pantić, *Iz Prirode*, p. 52. Similar acts of commemoration are, of course, well known in other parts of the world.